

February 20, 1962

Dr. M.M. Kessler  
Lincoln Laboratory  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Kessler:

Thank you for so promptly sending me the papers I had asked you for. I should not be surprised at the congruence of our views on the needs of our science communication network. But I must admit that I was startled at the similarity between your proposals summarized on Figure 1 of your "An Experimental Communications Center for Scientific and Technical Information" and the scheme I have been pressing to have considered by the President's Scientific Advisory Committee. A special panel for science information, of which I am a member, has been sitting for the last several months to look at the whole question and I have been particularly annoyed by the tendency of most considerations of the problem to deal with the "components" and the retrieval elements instead of the basic systems requirements. Like yourself, I believe we have to start with an explicit experiment of measured dimensions, but I am afraid that it will not reach the critical mass needed to achieve respectability and conventionality without clever planning and government participation. Perhaps fortunately for the purpose scientific communication in biology is very much more disorganized than in the physical sciences and therefore creates even more compelling demands for solution.

May I ask you two favors? 1. Would you be in a position to send me the "experimental work" that you refer to in your just cited paper. I am not clear whether this is an allusion to your JA-1880 or your WJCC-6.2, 1961 contributions.

2. Could you send about 20 copies of the "experimental communications center" to Dr. David Z. Robinson, Secretary, Science Information Panel, Office of the Science Advisor to the President, The White House, Washington, D.C., for distribution to our committee. Perhaps this should be accompanied by a note that I had requested this of you.

Any other thoughts you may have on this problem that might help the specific implementation of your proposals would be most welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL:pg